

# St. John's Church of England VA Primary School



## History Policy

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Chair of Governors	<i>A. Harris</i>
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*Shining Bright Together As One Family*

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## 1. St. John's Christian Vision and Values

We have high aspirations and expectations for all our pupils, aiming to provide a safe and secure environment in which everyone can flourish and grow as God's children. Working together with parents and carers, we are building strong relationships, enabling us to 'Shine Bright Together as One Family.'

This reflects our Christian vision and associated values, where every member of our school community – pupils, parents, staff and governors – has a role to play in ensuring every person thrives. Our vision is based on the words of Jesus written in Matthew chapter 5 verse 16:

“In the same way, let your light shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

The desire at St. John's is for every person to shine their own light brightly, whether it be through academic ability, sport, music, art or personal interest outside of school. Everyone is important and special: a unique masterpiece in the eyes of God.

We also feel it is important that we are never truly alone. At St. John's, we stand together with each other, supporting and helping, celebrating and comforting. We are one school, church and community family, doing life together.

The four key Christian values which are particularly important in the life of our school are:

- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Respect
- Perseverance

## 2. Statement of Intent

Our town of Shildon and the surrounding areas are steeped in history. Our history curriculum is designed to reflect this and make use of these invaluable resources. It has been developed to strengthen our pupils' pride and sense of belonging to our locality, through local studies and trips as well as local visitors.

We aim to inspire our pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world as well as their place in it, and to arouse a curiosity for the people and events that came before us. Starting in EYFS, and progressing into KS1, children will learn about historical people and places which they can relate to their own lives, families and communities. This moves onto learning about significant people and places and reasons why we remember them which prepares our pupils for remembering significant periods in the KS2 curriculum. In KS2, children build a coherent, chronological narrative of important periods of British history from the first settlers to the invasions that followed. KS2 pupils will also have opportunities for comparative work and to form judgements on the advancements of other societies and civilisations around the world, stretching their understanding that different people lived around the world at the same time. We will maintain a strong local aspect to history, looking at the changes that have happened in Shildon over time, including the development of the railway through the town and its impact.

Embedded in our curriculum are five 'learning threads' through which children will develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects. These learning threads (Transport, Homes, Invasion, Roles of Men & Women and Religion & Beliefs) run through our curriculum from EYFS to Year 6. They support our pupils in making connections and developing a strong overview of chronology, breadth and local to global history, which builds a stronger web of knowledge to ensure it is remembered across year groups and key stages.

As developing historians, children will be encouraged to question and challenge ideas with evidence through class discussion and debates using information from the past to inform those opinions. Over the course of their time at St. John's, pupils will develop an understanding of how we know about the past through a range of sources of evidence and with increasing confidence will consider their utility and reliability.

Our objectives in the teaching of history are to:

- foster in children an interest in the past, and to develop an understanding that enables them to enjoy all that history has to offer;
- enable children to know about significant events in British history, and to appreciate how things have changed over time;
- develop a sense of chronology;
- know and understand how the British system of democratic government has developed and, in so doing, to contribute to a child's citizenship education;
- understand how Britain is part of a wider European culture, and to study some aspects of European history;
- have some knowledge and understanding of historical development in the wider world;

- help children understand society and their place within it, so that they develop a sense of their cultural heritage;
- develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation;
- develop the necessary skills to be able to interpret differing interpretations of historical events.

### 3. Curriculum

At St. John's, we are committed to providing a rich and engaging history curriculum that sparks curiosity and fosters a love of learning about the past. Our curriculum is designed to be age-appropriate, progressive, and locally relevant, helping pupils connect with their community and the wider world. We use the National Curriculum for the basis of our history topics, which we have then strongly adapted to our local context.

Our history topics in Key Stage One and Two include:

- Local history of Shildon and County Durham, exploring changes in the community, industry, and notable local figures.
- Ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Mayans, and Romans, to develop an understanding of early societies and their influence on the modern world.
- Significant historical figures from Britain and beyond, encouraging pupils to learn about their contributions and impact.
- Key historical events, including major wars, social movements, and political changes, to help pupils understand how history shapes society today.

The curriculum is carefully planned to build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills, ensuring a clear progression from early years through to upper key stage 2. We aim to make history meaningful by linking topics to pupils' own experiences, our 'Learning Threads' and encouraging them to ask questions, investigate sources, and develop their own interpretations of the past.

## **4. The Early Years Foundation Stage**

We teach history in EYFS as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. In EYFS, we relate the history aspect of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. History makes a significant contribution to developing a child's knowledge and understanding of the world, through activities such as dressing up in historical costumes, reading stories as a group, looking at pictures of famous people in history, or discovering the meaning of vocabulary (e.g. 'new' and 'old') in relation to their own lives.

## **5. History in other areas of the Curriculum**

At St. John's, we believe that history is not just confined to our dedicated lessons, but is woven throughout other areas of the curriculum to enrich pupils' understanding and make learning more meaningful.

### **English**

We believe that combining history with English enriches pupils' understanding of the past while developing their reading, writing, and communication skills. This integrated approach encourages pupils to explore historical topics through a variety of engaging activities. Pupils study a range of historical documents, letters, speeches, and narratives, which helps improve their comprehension skills and deepens their understanding of different time periods. Children practise writing reports or creative stories based on historical events, fostering their ability to communicate ideas clearly and persuasively. Pupils learn to analyse primary and secondary sources critically, developing skills in interpretation, evaluation, and evidence-based reasoning. Through activities like writing diaries, letters, or scripts from the perspective of historical figures, students engage imaginatively with history, enhancing empathy and understanding. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills by presenting historical topics and participating in discussions, helping them articulate their ideas confidently. By integrating history and English, we aim to help pupils develop strong literacy skills alongside a rich understanding of history, making learning both meaningful and enjoyable.

### **Mathematics**

We see the connection between history and mathematics as a valuable way to develop pupils' analytical and problem-solving skills while exploring the past. Combining these subjects helps pupils understand how mathematical concepts have been used throughout history and how they can interpret historical data. Pupils can examine historical statistics, such as population figures, economic data, or census information, to identify patterns, trends, and changes over time. Students learn to create graphs, charts, and timelines to visualise historical information, making complex data more understandable and engaging. Exploring how mathematical ideas, like measurements, calculations, or probability, played a role in historical events or discoveries helps pupils see the practical applications of math in real-world contexts. Pupils develop their reasoning skills by interpreting numerical evidence from historical sources, fostering critical thinking about the reliability and significance of data. Using mathematical skills to solve historical puzzles or analyse economic and social issues from the past encourages a deeper understanding of historical contexts. By integrating history and mathematics, we aim to help pupils see the relevance of math in understanding the world historically and develop their skills in data analysis, reasoning, and problem-solving.

### **Personal, social and health education (PSHE)**

History contributes significantly to the teaching of PSHE. At St. John's, we recognise that understanding history helps pupils develop important personal and social skills. By exploring past events, societies, and figures, pupils gain insights into different cultures, perspectives, and values, which supports their growth as respectful and informed individuals. Studying historical societies and events encourages pupils to appreciate cultural differences and promotes respect for others. For example, learning about different civilizations or social movements helps pupils understand the importance of equality and tolerance. Exploring the lives and experiences of people from the past

allows pupils to see the world through different perspectives, fostering empathy and compassion. Discussing how societies have changed over time helps pupils understand the concepts of change, stability, and progress, which are key themes in PSHE related to personal development and societal awareness. Historical studies often highlight struggles for rights and justice, providing context for discussions about fairness, rights, and responsibilities in their own lives today. Analysing historical sources and events encourages pupils to think critically, question information, and develop resilience when faced with complex issues. By integrating PSHE into history, we aim to nurture well-rounded, thoughtful individuals who understand their place in a diverse and changing world.

### **Computing**

At St. John's, we believe that combining history with computing offers exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their research, analytical, and digital skills. By exploring historical topics through technology, pupils can engage more deeply with the past while enhancing their computing abilities. Pupils use computers and the internet to research historical events, figures, and sources, developing their skills in evaluating information and navigating digital resources responsibly. Students can produce multimedia presentations, timelines, or digital stories about historical topics, helping them organise information creatively and effectively. Using spreadsheets or data analysis tools, pupils can examine historical statistics or patterns, fostering their ability to interpret data and draw conclusions. Pupils might use simulation or modelling software to recreate historical environments or events, gaining a better understanding of historical contexts through interactive technology. Exploring online archives and digitised primary sources allows pupils to engage directly with authentic historical materials, developing their skills in handling and analysing historical evidence. By integrating history and computing, we aim to equip pupils with the skills to research, analyse, and present historical information effectively using modern technology, preparing them for a digital world.

## **6. Enrichment & Resources**

There are sufficient resources for all history teaching units in the school. We keep these resources in a central store, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. The library contains a good supply of topic books and software to support children's individual research. Children have access through local council schemes to documents, letters, photographs and artefacts that help bring history to life. Pupils use digital and physical timelines to explore historical events in chronological order, alongside maps and atlases to locate the period of study. We use online databases and archives such as the British Library or National Archives. Children will deepen their knowledge of history topics by engaging in meaningful enrichment activities such as visiting local museums, heritage sites or landmarks. Class teachers may invite visitors to the classroom such as historians, archaeologists, local experts or people from the community to enhance learning. At St. John's, we recognise the importance of celebrating key historical events, we may have themed days/weeks or assemblies to commemorate significant dates or periods of time.

## **7. SEND & History**

At our school, we teach history to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. This accords with the school's curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our history teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, higher achievers, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, adaptation of activities – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. Assessments made by teachers against the National Curriculum's attainment targets allow us to consider each child's attainment and progress in relation to the levels expected. This helps to ensure that our teaching is matched to the child's needs. The work done by the pupils in history may contribute to the targets set out in Support Plans. Teachers will have regard to these targets when planning lessons and designing tasks for history lessons. We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning history. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example a visit to an archaeological dig, we carry out a robust risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

## 8. Planning

History is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We use the national programmes of study as the basis for our curriculum planning in history. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we plan progression into the units and objectives, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move through the school. Our planning is based on the themes and topics chosen by the school for each term.

In History we have two planning documents – a long-term overview plan and a medium- / short-term plan combined. The long-term plan maps the history topics studied in each term during each key stage. The subject leader devises this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach the knowledge, skills and understanding set out in the National Curriculum through the corresponding programme of study. Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. These medium-term plans also include specific learning objectives set out by the subject lead. These then inform planning activities and lessons for teachers.

Our medium-term planning is devised under these headings:

### **Topic Title**

**Key Question** – an overarching question that learning in the topic will answer e.g. ‘What have the Ancient Greeks done for us?’

**Learning Threads** – Transport, Homes, Invasion, Roles of Men & Women, Religion & Beliefs

### **National Curriculum Objective**

**Rationale** – teachers will gain an understanding of why this topic is being taught

### **Opportunities for Spiritual Development**

**Intended Learning** – non-negotiable objectives that must be taught (Constructing the Past, Sequencing the Past, Change & Development, Cause & Effect, Significance & Interpretation, Historical Enquiry, Using Sources as Evidence)

### **Historical Vocabulary**

### **Topic Related Books**

**Suggested Activities** – short term planning for teachers, lesson by lesson, these are around 6-8 lessons per topic

### **Possible Misconceptions**

**Topic Enhancement** – enrichment that will enhance children’s learning of a particular topic e.g. a museum visit or visitor into school.

These plans are then used and adapted each year. They are reviewed by the subject lead on a regular basis and the subject lead cross references with work in books and lesson observations to ensure that content is being taught.

## 9. Teaching and Learning

In History lessons, teachers encourage children to participate actively through discussions, debates, and role-playing to make history engaging and memorable. Teachers will incorporate maps, timelines, photographs, and videos to help students visualise historical events and understand their context better. During lessons, children are taught how to critically analyse primary and secondary sources, fostering skills in interpretation and evaluation. Open-ended questions are used to stimulate curiosity and develop critical thinking about historical causes and effects. Lessons are adapted to cater to different learning styles and abilities, ensuring all students can access and enjoy history. Teachers will promote group work and projects where students can share ideas, research together, and learn from peers. Teachers make connections with English, Maths, PSHE, and other subjects to provide a richer, more integrated learning experience. As well as incorporating digital tools, interactive quizzes, and online resources to make lessons dynamic and accessible. Children have access to organised visits to local museums, heritage sites, or historical landmarks to bring learning to life outside the classroom. Teachers use formative assessments like quizzes, presentations, work in books and effective questioning to monitor progress and guide future teaching.

## **10. Assessment**

Assessment is a key part of supporting children's learning in history at St. John's. We use quizzes, class discussions, and quick writes during lessons to check understanding and guide instruction. In addition to this, we use 'Daily Quiz', outside our dedicated History time, to check pupils' knowledge retention from one topic/year/key stage to the next. Children will be questioned effectively in lessons to assess knowledge and inform future planning.

At the start of each topic children will complete an initial assessment answering the key question, children will then add to this assessment in a different coloured pen lesson by lesson as their knowledge grows. Teachers may also use standalone activities to check knowledge and understanding of a topic such as longer pieces of writing, end of topic projects or role play. Children are given the chance to review each other's work and reflect on their own learning to develop critical thinking skills. Teachers give regular feedback and constructive comments to children during live marking of books in lessons to help children improve and understand their progress.

## **11. Monitoring & Review**

The coordination and planning of the history curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in history and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the head teacher and governors a termly summary report in which the strengths and weaknesses in history are evaluated and the areas for further improvement are indicated;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work and to monitor and evaluate the progress made by children in history across the school.

The quality of teaching and learning in history is monitored and evaluated by the head teacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluation. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or sooner if necessary.

***Mrs N. Pallister***

(Head Teacher)

***Mrs K. Watson***

(Subject Leader)

*July 2025*